



Public Affairs Office
PO Box 1306
Albuquerque, NM 87103
505/248-6911
505/248-6915 (Fax)

News Release

Southwest Region (Arizona • New Mexico • Oklahoma • Texas) <http://southwest.fws.gov>
Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge 1611 North Second Avenue, Ajo, AZ 85321

For Immediate Release

For More Information Contact: Sid Slone, Refuge Manager (520) 387-6483

**Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge and the Barry M. Goldwater Range East Proposes
Visitor Use Changes in the Childs Valley and Childs Mountain Regions**

Interested Parties:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is proposing to provide additional recreational opportunities for visitors to experience the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) and United States Air Force Barry M. Goldwater Air Force Range East (BMGR-E) in the Childs Valley and Childs Mountain areas. The Childs Valley is located between the Growler Mountain Range and the eastern boundary of the Refuge that lies adjacent to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands. Childs Mountain forms the northeastern boundary of the Childs Valley and spans lands managed by the Service and BMGR-E.

Childs Valley:

The Childs Valley is a broad valley dominated by creosote and bursage; along with small pockets of saguaro and organ pipe cacti. The valley provides habitat for the endangered Sonoran pronghorn and lesser long-nosed bat, desert bighorn sheep, mountain lion, coyote, bobcat, mule deer, and migratory and non-migratory bird species.

Although more than a dozen miles of administrative roads run through Childs Valley, current visitor use on these trails is restricted to hikers. Due to the success of the Sonoran pronghorn recovery efforts and in response to the public's request for additional recreational opportunities, the Service is considering the following actions within Childs Valley: 1) opening administrative roads to bicyclists, 2) expanding equestrian use, and 3) opening Copper Canyon and the Cameron Charco Roads to vehicles.

Specifically, the Service is proposing the following (number in parentheses indicates intersection numbers)¹:

- **Copper Canyon Road (716 to 127):**
 - Bicyclists would be allowed in groups of 10 or less bicycles. Bicyclists must remain on the road while with their bikes. Groups greater than 10 would require a Refuge SUP.
 - Motorized vehicles would be allowed in groups of 4 or less vehicles. Vehicles must remain on the road at all times and have high clearance and 4WD. Greater than 4 vehicles would require a Refuge SUP.

- Chico Shunie Road (717 to 601):
 - Bicyclists would be allowed in groups of 10 or less bicycles. Bicyclists must remain on the road while with their bikes. Groups greater than 10 would require a Refuge SUP.
 - Camping would not be allowed within ½ mile of the historic Chico Shunie Village site.
- San Antonio Mica Mine Road (718):
 - Bicyclists would be allowed in groups of 10 or less bicycles. Bicyclists must remain on the road while with their bikes. Groups greater than 10 would require a Refuge SUP.
- Childs Valley Road to Charlie Bell Road (720A to 126):
 - Bicyclists would be allowed in groups of 10 or less bicycles. Bicyclists must remain on the road while with their bikes. Groups greater than 10 would require a Refuge SUP.
- Cameron Charco Road (720A to 720B):
 - Bicyclists would be allowed in groups of 10 or less bicycles. Bicyclists must remain on the road while with their bikes. Groups greater than 10 would require a Refuge SUP.
 - Because this section of the road provides connectivity between BLM Road 8114 from Lime Hill to Cameron Charco, 10 or less vehicles per party would be allowed on this road. Vehicles must remain on the road at all times and have high clearance and 4WD.

Childs Mountain:

Childs Mountain, located in the Arizona Upland subdivision of the Sonoran Desert, is dominated by foothill paloverde and saguaro cacti. Chain fruit cholla and barrel cactus are also found throughout the area. Childs Mountain provides habitat for desert bighorn sheep; coyote; bobcat; mule deer; migratory and non-migratory bird species; and a variety of reptiles, including the Sonoran desert tortoise and Gila monster.

Visitor access is currently allowed in the BMGR-E Ajo AF Station area at SR-85 mile marker 36.6, between the highway and approximately 3 miles west to the Childs Mountain Road administrative gate. Visitors must obtain and comply with the BMGR-E visitor access permit for recreational activities.

The Service and BMGR-E are considering the following changes to the Childs Mountain Road west of the Childs Mountain administrative gate¹:

- Pedestrians would be allowed.
- Bicyclists would be allowed in groups of 10 or less bicycles. Bicyclists must remain on the road while with their bikes. Groups greater than 10 bicycles would require a Refuge Special Use Permit.
- Motorized vehicles and the use of stock animals would not be allowed.

Stock Animals:

Stock animals; defined as domestic horses, mules, or donkeys; are currently restricted to traveling only on administrative trails, dry washes, and along the base of the mountain ranges on the Refuge. The Service is considering the following change to the use of stock animals on the Refuge:

- Stock animals would be allowed to travel throughout the Refuge, with the exception of the Childs Mountain Road, in groups of 4 or less animals, with a Refuge SUP, and under the following conditions:
 - Grazing or use of wildlife waters by stock animals would not be allowed.

- All stock animals would be fed weed free feed 3 or more days prior to entering and while on the refuge.

The Service is currently in the scoping phase of this action. Comments provided on the proposed action will be used to develop a National Environmental Policy Act document and assist in determining the course of action. Please provide your comments either in writing at the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, 1611 North Second Avenue, Ajo, Arizona 85321 or electronically at Mary_Kralovec@fws.gov by September 16, 2016.

¹See attached map for administrative trails and intersection numbers.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 544 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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